

Te Pae Tawhiti Launch
Māori Economic Development
Te Papa 16 March 2011

Speech by Professor Charles Royal
Director, Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga

Tēnā koutou katoa.

Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga, I would like to welcome you and thank you for attending the launch of this important piece of research concerning Māori Economic Development. I bring apologies from Sir Tipene O'Regan, chair of the Board of Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga, who is unable to be with us this evening.

This research is one of two major projects both entitled *Te Pae Tawhiti*, and both concerned with critical research designed to bring about benefits and outcomes in years to come. One of these projects concerns the Māori language and this project we are launching this evening. Together they represent the single largest research investment by Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga.

Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga is a centre of research excellence hosted by the University of Auckland. Our role is to conduct excellent research concerning needs and opportunities arising in Māori communities thereby harnessing the 'creative potential' of those communities for national development. Ngā Pae is an inter-institutional network of collaborating researchers located in a variety of research providers – including universities, whare wānanga, CRIs, Te Papa and more. Our work is focused upon the transformation of our communities in positive ways that are meaningful to those communities.

We assert that Māori communities – their knowledge, skills, resources, people, assets and so on – represent a net national opportunity. Whilst indeed a range of key issues facing our people do remain – health disparities, imprisonment rates,

education underperformance for example – on the whole these issues need to be placed within a larger paradigm of creative potential. All Māori communities retain creative potential, the ability to address their issues and to seize upon their opportunities to bring new possibilities in ways that are meaningful to them and to the nation overall.

Te Pae Tawhiti, or ‘the distant horizon’, communicates the idea of seeking to conduct groundbreaking research whose intention is to bring about new possibilities in years to come. The research is designed to be innovative and to allow entirely fresh thinking and energy, to flow, to be brought to bear upon issues and opportunities arising in Māori communities.

Recently, Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga implemented a new strategic research priority entitled ‘Optimising Māori Economic Performance’. The so-called Māori economy is an extraordinary and distinctive dimension of New Zealand’s economy. It is replete with many issues and also with many opportunities and we are determined to address those issues and yield those opportunities through our research activities.

Some of the features of Māori economic development include those concerning uplifting Māori participation and success in New Zealand’s economy. In recent decades, great inroads have been taken with respect to uplifting Māori participation in the conventional sectors of our economy, such as forestry, fishing and agriculture. I call this the challenge of participation.

Emerging from these activities is the possibility of creating distinctive products and services from the ‘materials’ of the Māori world. In this arena, our creative challenge relates to the creation of tradable products and services derived from the circumstances of our communities – people, knowledge, resources, assets, organizations – that may not be derived from any other source. I call this the challenge of distinctiveness.

Finally, there is the possibility of the positive transformation of the instruments of the economy itself. Māori communities possess certain cultural prescriptions and perceptions that may hold value to the overall New Zealand economy. These include the desire to utilize generations as a planning timeframe, the inalienability of certain assets, certain approaches to wealth distribution and ideas about the nature of value and its generation. I call this the challenge of economic innovation.

There are a number of foci to research in Māori economic development, however, two domains are particularly important. The first is the contemporary settlement of claims brought before the Treaty of Waitangi Tribunal. As settlements represent, in most communities, the single greatest source for the injection of new capital, the successful completion of a claim is critical for birthing a new future for the community. The challenge relates to how one brings a claim to a successful conclusion and then sets in place arrangements for the continuous and increasing yield of value (defined broadly) from the settlement in times to come.

A second and equally important domain for Māori economic development is the successful creation of sustainable and successful value generating enterprises in iwi, hapū, whānau and general Māori communities. The problem of Māori dependence upon the state is well known and need not be repeated here. The creative challenge is how to get our people on to creative footing wherein they are able to dream of possibilities for themselves on the basis of what they have, rather than what they feel they have lost or don't have. The creation of value generating enterprises (again, value defined broadly) is critically important.

A good deal of the innovation we are seeking in these settings is cultural, social and psychological innovation. For too many of our people, their experience tells them that authority exists outside of them and life is to played out as a reaction to external forces. The renewal of mana is critical to Māori economic development for it provides choices, possibilities and opportunities. People feel empowered, feel positive, feel that they are able to do something to improve

their circumstances. From this point of view, the renewal of mana is essential to Māori economic development.

The research we are launching tonight must be cognizant, intelligent and informed of the actual realities facing our people. It needs to be connected to the 'coal face' of Māori economic development and always be seeking to provide solutions and assistance, so that we, as a people, may achieve these goals.

Governance is a critical issue as iwi/hapū communities ready themselves the settlement of claims and general a level and scale of activity not see in their communities for perhaps a century or more. One of the critical journeys being taken by our communities is moving their governance entities from being mechanisms of distribution to mechanisms of investment – developing and yielding value over a long period of time.

In the arena of the economy, it strikes me that the challenge and opportunity facing us is not just to uplift Māori participation and success in the New Zealand and international economies but also to transform it, to change it positively in small and large ways. In my view, the real prize to be sought in Māori economic development is not so much participation and success in the existing economy – something that should have been our reality for a century or more now – but rather to imagine alternative possibilities for the way in which the economy behaves, We have an opportunity to think deeply about such things as what is value? How is value to be distributed? What do we mean by fair and equitable distribution of wealth and value? Should wealth and value be distributed fairly and equitably? What kinds of planning horizons might be sought? Other questions go to the heart of the capitalist enterprise – what is meant by the commodification of assets and their tradeability? I encourage our researchers and thinkers not to shy away from

I would like to thank Hon Dr Pita Sharples for his support. I would also like to thank Hon Georgina Te Heuheu, Associate Minister of Māori Affairs for launching this Pae Tawhiti Research Project this evening.

Te Pae Tawhiti is an initiative first developed by Professors Linda Smith and Michael Walker and later assisted by Dr Tracey MacIntosh, all previous directors of Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga. I would like to acknowledge them this evening.

I would also like to congratulate Professor Graham Smith and Richard Jeffries of Te Whare Wānanga-o-Awanuiārangi and Jeremy Gardiner of Te Rūnanga-o-Ngāti Awa for agreeing to lead us in this research. I would like to particularly congratulate Te Whare Wānanga-o-Awanuiārangi for the establishment of Te Pourewa Arotahi, the Institute for Post-Settlement Futures. This is a far sighted development and the coordination of the Te Pae Tawhiti initiative with Te Pourewa Arotahi is indeed serendipitous.

We are delighted to launch this initiative this evening.

Tēnā koutou katoa